February 8, 2017

Honorable Laura Taylor Swain
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Courthouse
500 Pearl St.
New York, NY 10007-1312

Dear Judge Swain,

My name is Catherine Sansonetti and I am married to the defendant, David Hobson. We have been happily together for 20 years now and married for almost 18 years. We do not have children but share our home with our small dogs. I am an attorney and work in public interest law. I believe defendants struggle to set themselves apart from the conduct that has brought them before the Court. All I can do in advance of sentencing, as the person that knows Dave best, is share with you the loving, kind, and gentle person he is.

Dave is very kind and lighthearted. He and his younger brother were fortunate to grow up with two loving and working parents in a middle-class neighborhood. Together, his parents instilled in him values that helped to shape the person he is today. They expected him to strive to do his best, and he did. He is bright and hardworking, and was a good student and athlete throughout school. His parents divorced shortly before he went to college at 17 years old. Dave majored in business with a finance focus. He contributed to the cost of his education by taking student loans and working as part of his university's 5-year cooperative program. During college, he worked at a property and casualty company as the Assistant to the Director. After graduation, he was offered an opportunity to continue work with the company and accepted. Later, at age 26, he became a Financial Advisor. He has been continuously employed since he was 18 years old. Within his firms, he had a good business reputation and always strived to do his very best by his clients. Now, his career of 22 years is lost and he must start anew.

Despite the enormity of the loss Dave feels regarding his career, he has not been sitting around sulking. He obtained new work in the commercial construction industry starting out as a laborer. This was not an easy task for a 48-year-old with a bad back and knees who has spent his adult life working in the finance sector. I had reservations about whether he would last at this new job, but since he always did a lot of things around the house and yard, I hoped he would adapt. He started out knowing absolutely nothing, but because he is a hard worker, he caught on quickly. I did not think he enjoyed the work at first, but soon enough, I noticed that he came home from his new job smiling. After his first couple of months on the job, he applied for a hoisting engineer license to operate certain machinery and expand his capabilities on the job site. He achieved that goal. I am proud of him for his efforts.

In addition to being a hard-working and disciplined individual, there is a very soft side to Dave. In fact, he is one of the kindest people I have ever met. He is generally a quiet person with simple tastes and pleasures. He takes pride in caring for others, taking care of our home, and is a huge animal lover who has come to the aid of little innocent critters when there was an opportunity to help. I remember many years ago, while out walking our dogs, Dave noticed a squirrel trapped and struggling inside someone's trash can. Dave turned the trash can over to release the squirrel. However, the animal was freezing and exhausted from near-drowning. Instead of walking away to let nature decide the outcome, Dave ran back to our house to get a dog carrier and towel and he insisted we take the squirrel home. Not knowing what to do next, he contacted a wildlife rehabilitator for advice. After some rest and warmth from a household heating pad, the squirrel regained its strength and Dave released it near the spot it was found, scurrying off to see another day. This small act of kindness had a great impact on another living being. This is just one of thousands of small acts Dave has done that speak volumes about him.

The kind, unselfish, and giving character of Dave is best exemplified by the care he has provided to his parents. Many elderly individuals fear they may not be able to stay in their own home. Dave's parents are blessed to a son like Dave who dedicates so much of himself to their needs. Dave has had to do increasing things to help his father including transportation, access to community services, access to healthcare, and chores within the home. His father lives alone and nearby to us, so Dave checks in on him a few times a week. His father wishes to remain in his own home so Dave helped to make his home more accessible after he suffered two falls by clearing out clutter to accommodate use of a walker. He has done a variety of other tasks that now are difficult, if not impossible for his father to do alone. Dave is his father's lifeline.

In addition, Dave manages his mother's affairs and declining health. Dave's mother has been diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia. Dave provided many supports to his mother over the years as varying degrees of cognitive decline and loss of executive functions took hold. Like Dave's father, his mother also lived alone. The help he gave her intensified as her disease progressed. Unfortunately, as functions are lost, they are lost irreparably and forever. This poses many challenges in care for caretakers and family alike. However, Dave was always resourceful in seeking out ways to simplify her life and structure her days at home. As with many families whose loved ones suffer from dementia, the day came where an outside living arrangement was needed. David looked at about eight facilities specializing in memory care and carefully envisioned the best fit for his mother where she could have a full array of activities and comforts within a budget that would preserve her savings for her care. Caring for a person with dementia is not something that is easy and being in a facility doesn't lessen the load. Hospitalizations due to secondary infections and behavioral issues are common and Dave is the person contacted as her healthcare power of attorney. He makes decisions thoughtfully about suggested modifications to her care plan. This form of dementia results in a more rapid loss of speech and language, so communication with his mother is difficult, but she clearly enjoys her son. In fact, recently, she lit up when she saw Dave and said to another resident "That's my boy!" She will suffer without his presence in her life, notwithstanding her limitations in telling us. Dave's brother lives out of state. Being a capable caretaker to someone with dementia not only requires a reliable person and presence, but there is a steep learning curve. Dave has mastered the task.

This experience has been extremely traumatic for our whole family and for me especially. From the day that Dave told me he was in trouble, I felt extreme sadness, knowing at that instant that his life would change forever. Being his wife, I also knew that my life would change too. In those first days, I could not make sense of what I was hearing. Up until this point, Dave had brought nothing but love, respect, kindness and happiness to me for two decades. I saw my happy life flash before me. But, I realized that Dave needed love and support and I made the decision to walk this difficult road with him. I did not anticipate how my perseverance would be challenged along the way. I have always known, though, that these hard days will one day be behind us. I think I can keep that in mind because of Dave. One of the many things I admire about my husband is his ability to accept those things he cannot change. Despite trying to put on a happy face, however, inside his heart is broken and he is suffering. He's lost a career that he greatly enjoyed and faces a permanent bar in his chosen vocation. He's consented to forfeiture which has crippling financial consequences. He's greatly saddened about the impact this conviction will have on our lives.

Dave has endeavored to bring stability, happiness, love, and kindness to my life for the 20 years we have been together. He is my whole life and makes my life whole. Together with family and friends, I am heartbroken at the thought of Dave being incarcerated. I can only hope our separation is short and that the difficult time we are apart can be offset by us always keeping the faith that there will be a brighter tomorrow. The Court has received letters from friends, family and neighbors offering a glimpse into Dave's character. Together, the letters chronicle a human being whose life has been filled with delivering love and assistance to all those around him. David has navigated every relationship in his life with ease because of his rather good-natured personality and generosity to others. These friendships and family ties have forged deep roots that continue to ground Dave throughout this ordeal. Some might be shunned by friends or within their communities when faced with a criminal matter, but the fact that ours continue to support Dave is a testament to the kind of person he is. I believe this circle of support will help Dave to get through his sentence and beyond. A felony conviction poses many barriers. However, knowing Dave as I do, I know that will not stop him from continuing to be a productive and law-abiding contributing member of society. He is a self-starter with a strong desire to overcome the barriers he faces and put the losses and consequences of his conviction behind him. His core values include hard work, dedication and loyalty which will serve him well as he rebuilds his life.

It is my sincere wish that my letter to you demonstrates the very sweet and special man my husband is. I have every intention of continuing to love and to cherish him, all the days of my life, as I promised on our wedding day. It is hard to accept that I will lose him even for a while, but I will consider myself blessed that the loss is only temporary. Upon his return, I will provide all the support and encouragement he needs to achieve the new goals he may set for himself. I pray that you will deliver a lenient sentence to Dave based on his wonderful character and that you will consider the great losses he already has sustained, as well as the impact his absence will be to those who truly depend on him.

Very truly yours,

Catherine Sansonetti

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